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it is to hold has at least been secured, and it is no small thing toward the influence a museum of art should exert that it be itself an object of beauty and an illustration of art. This the edifice which fairly matches its vis-à-vis, Trinity Church—the finest modern-built church in the world—in novel and satisfying picturesqueness and appropriateness, may certainly claim to be, warming our gray timorousness of taste with glowing color as it does, and indulging the American predilection for lightness and elegance of construction, as opposed to the ponderous style of construction of the Old World.

But let it not be supposed that our museum is empty either. You have had in this correspondence a description of the glorious masterpiece of Praxiteles, recently discovered at Olympia, the first (and perhaps still the only) cast of which in this country is here. A collection of casts from which, as the trustees' report says, "a peripatetic lecturer might discourse upon the history of sculpture in Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, with examples before him of almost every phase of its rise and decline," is surely a good, sound, and broad foundation for a museum. It is indeed confidently pronounced the best collection of casts in the United States by far, and one of the best in the world. Besides the noble Hermes from Olympia, above mentioned, there have been recently added the great Amazon bas-relief from the Villa Albani, several fine sarcophagi from the Vatican, one of the bas-reliefs from the Arch of Titus, and a number of stèles and fragments, some of which are not to be found in the grand collections of arts at Berlin and Paris. From the Cyprian glass and pottery to the Saracenic architectural sculptures from the country of the Moors, the chronological gaps have been nearly all filled, and modern art from the Renaissance, as shown through Japanese and Chinese art, to contemporary industry in Europe and America in fabrics and pottery, is almost as comprehensively represented.

But still it is confessed that with all the completeness of the museum collection as a general art exhibit, it is not yet the picture gallery that a museum is expected to be. With its \$500 a year for purchases, it is not likely to rival Madrid or Munich for some years to come. But there are a number of splendid private collections in Boston to be dispersed in the natural order of events, and it is very probable that the museum will be remembered in many wills in the course of the next twenty years. It is remarked, with a tone of disappointment, in the trustees' report, that the exhibition of contemporary art which was held in conjunction with the Boston Art Club last spring, and which consisted of more than eight hundred pictures sent by contributors from all parts of the country, failed, though largely attended, to attract the general attention which its unusual merits deserved. It was an unacknowledged attempt to inaugurate an exhibition in Boston that should be something such an event for the art and artists of the whole country as is the exhibition of your National Academy of Design. The officials of the museum took more pains with it than they ever would, or indeed ever could again, because the galleries of the new wing had just been completed, and a rearrangement of the whole contents of the museum was at hand. What the museum trustees must first do to give this institution prestige and influence throughout the land with a metropolitan annual exhibition is to provide ample galleries for a temporary exhibition so as not to disturb the permanent one. This they could easily accomplish, and at light cost, by utilizing the huge lot in the rear of the museum, and building to it an annex like the art annex at the Centennial Exhibition. In fact this has been much talked of, and favorably considered by those in authority. But the present management have still, as from the beginning, their ambition and desires chiefly centred upon the permanent building, and the chairman, Mr. C. C. Perkins, concludes his report with the characteristic aspiration: "It seems not unreasonable to hope that some of those who took part in the modest beginnings of the museum may live to see the building completed according to the original plan."

Two of your New York artists have made special exhibitions of their work here during the past fortnight. Mr. George Inness has had the gallery of the Art Club for a collection of twenty-six of his latest pictures, landscapes splendid with all the verve of technique and richness of color and light for which he is distinguished. Never was his optimistic enjoyment of nature, or his enthusiasm for work, more lively, to judge from these

latest products. The criticism oftentimes heard here, where Inness is well known from a long residence, and much admired, is that along with this splendid composition, this confident facility in transmitting nature into glowing visions matching the artist's own fervid fancies, goes a certain unreality—the consequence of artistic exaggeration for theatric effect, which, while it extorts admiration for the ripe art of the academician, detaches the sympathy of the simple but earnest and devout lover of nature and truth. Mr. Coleman's show embraces several of his decorative panels, such as the one reproduced in a late number of the *THE ART AMATEUR*, and a number of landscapes and oil sketches. The panels, so exquisitely finished and delicately toned, have excited genuine applause for the skill and patience of the artist, and it has been a revelation to the lay public that the decorative panel could be done in any other way than the large, free, and dashing manner with the flowers and fruits in arbitrary and non-natural arrangement of stems and clusters, and the colors selected, heightened, and contrasted at will without much reference to nature, but as the design demanded. The sweet, simple, conscientious truth of Mr. Coleman's apple-blows and peach-blossoms upon a background of Madras muslin of equally tender tint shames the bravado of much of the decoration of the day imitated from the barbarisms of the Japanese or the archaisms of the English schools of decorative art.

Several of the younger generation of Boston artists are to be among the contributors to the next National Academy Exhibition in your city. You will have an example of Vinton's Bonnat-like portraiture, of Sellinger's too-faithful Munich technique, and of Dewing's Burne-Jonesism; and we shall be much interested to hear what you will say. Of exhibitions here, there is little at present to be said. J. Appleton Brown is soon to have one of which I will tell you in my next. He is the most poetic of our landscapists, and would attract notice anywhere, even among the best of the modern French school of landscape. The Saturday Club, including the best of Hunt's young lady pupils, is also soon to give a public exhibition. Otherwise the local show of paintings at present runs to foreign works, and some fine examples of the best names are always to be found here and there among the dealers.

The new St. Botolph Club expects to open its doors to its members about April 1. One of the purposes of this Boston Century Club is to hold a monthly exhibition of pictures, and the opening should be signalized with something of the kind. I hear that the third story, which is to be the especial habitat of the younger class of members, is to be turned over to the artists of the club to decorate at their own sweet will and with their own handiwork. It is to be hoped they will paint on movable panels such as Mr. Coleman's, for the club will want to remove probably before many years from the house that has been chosen for it—not the thing at all for the club representing the quintessence of Boston society, art, and letters.

GRETA.

AN ART PARASITE.

THE following portrait of a picturesque but otherwise objectionable person is sketched by the New York correspondent of The Louisville Courier-Journal:

"Perhaps the work of some of our good artists would be better appreciated if it were not for the crushing efforts of the professional picture buyers. One of this lot, and the worst knave in the pack, is an old fellow by the name of Chills, a portly old subject with a rubicund face, surrounded by a redundant mass of waving white hair. He is worth about a half a million of variegated plunder, and this stuff, added to his commanding physique, seats him on a pedestal for feminine admiration. With maiden ladies who have passed their tenth lustrum he is a 'fine-looking man'; with experienced widows he is a 'darling'; in reality he is a pestilent old rogue. He attends all the small sales, and when he finds a group in front of a really meritorious picture he thrusts his red face forward, looks for a moment, and exclaims, 'Pish! I wouldn't give \$5 for a wagon-load of such pictures.' Some one of the group will say, in awe-struck tones, 'That is the wealthy Mr. Chills, a great judge of art; we must be mistaken about the picture.' Old Chills afterward buys it for a song, and sells it at private sale at a thousand per cent profit. This old vulture has been known to buy some good pictures, have them copied cheap, and sell them for the

originals over and over again. In fact it is currently believed that he keeps two or three painters, clever in mere imitation, to forge the works of good artists, signature and all. The landscape painters are by this old fellow much maligned with meretricious imitations of their pictures, which are sold in the country, where detection is less easy. Now if Chills should go into the coffee or tea market and operate in this way, by notifying the general public that they were being imposed upon by spurious articles, and bringing the price down in this manner to suit his own purse, he would soon be cooling his heels in jail. In a more practical and less civilized community he would be found some night with his head in a ditch and his heels pointed to the disgusted starry heavens. But Chills is perfectly safe here. He is virtually rich. He is the American 'Isambert,' or on the highway to become so. By and by he will have his million, if he lives long enough. What does he want of a million? Why, to make a million with it, and if he should succeed in making several of them, the mantle of public esteem will be permanently draped upon his shoulders."

PRINCE DEMIDOFF AND THE SAN DONATO SALE.

THE great art event of the spring in Europe is the sale of Prince Demidoff's collections at the palace of San Donato. Concerning the eccentric owner of this famous palace The Parisian has the following:

"Prince Paul Demidoff often says, 'Ah! if I could only find a man who would undertake to change my collections every day!' This exclamation of ennui paints the whole nature of the man. He wants to enjoy, but no sooner has he enjoyed than he becomes bored, and desires some new distraction. The palace and collections of San Donato, which are to be sold at Florence in March, owe their existence, for the most part, to the grandfather and uncle of the present owners, the Princes Nicholas and Anatole Demidoff. The palace and the beginning of the collection only date from 1828. Ten years ago a first sale of pictures took place at Paris. The fabulous prices paid are still fresh in the minds of amateurs. Terborch's 'Congress of Munster' was sold for 182,000 francs; Cuypp's 'Avenue de Dordrecht,' 140,000 francs; Van Ostade's 'Village,' 104,000 francs; a Teniers, 110,000 francs; a Hobema, 77,000 francs. The day after the sale Prince Anatole Demidoff died and left the remains of his vast collections to Prince Paul, who has since passed his life in completing the lacunæ in the various departments. Now Prince Paul has taken a dislike to the Palace of San Donato and his collections. He wants to have a palace and a collection of which he shall have himself been the sole creator. He has therefore determined to install himself in the Château de Pratolino, which he is going to have rebuilt, and in which he will gather together a new collection of pictures and objects of art. Paul Demidoff is now a man of thirty-nine years of age. He came to Paris in 1858. He had not yet come into possession of his immense fortune; his uncle was still living, and his income was modest. He was a handsome man in the full force of the term—tall, slender, elegant; pale complexion, somewhat bronzed; brown hair and mustache; open and high forehead and pale-blue Slav eyes, soft, languid, and veiled by long lashes. Under a skin of satin he had muscles of steel; he was built to resist life and to triumph over life. He always used to dress in a short coat, a round hat, rather short trousers, and shoes. He never wore a waistcoat, and never suffered from cold. He was eccentric, sometimes excessively so. He would call up his servants, open all the windows, and take a cold bath. He had constantly at his bedside a decanter of iced champagne, of which he drank all night. Nobody, however, ever heard of Paul Demidoff being drunk. In the morning he sometimes had fancies worthy of Nero. He would send for four or five servants, and make them fight together until they had eliminated the victor, who received a handsome gratification."

The sale of the collections at the palace of San Donato began on Monday, March 15. There was an immense attendance, including several of the Rothschilds, the directors of the Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Antwerp museums, and a number of Americans. The pictures were sold on the first three days. The Herald gave, by cable, the result of the principal sales the opening day as follows, the names of buyers following the prices: